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# Commission Suspends Six Licenses, Initiates Investigation into Nova Farms, LLC

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## **Commission Suspends Six Licenses, Initiates Investigation into Nova Farms, LLC**

*Commission finds principal's alleged conspiracy to evade licensing and drug laws poses threat to public health, safety, and welfare*

**BOSTON**—The Cannabis Control Commission (Commission) on Friday issued a summary suspension order halting all medical and adult-use cannabis operations of Nova Farms, LLC (f/k/a BCWC, LLC) in Sheffield and Attleboro.

The order is based upon an ongoing Commission investigation into an entity principal who has ownership and controlling interests in six licenses and allegedly conspired to evade Commonwealth licensing and drug laws, thereby posing an imminent danger to public health, safety, and welfare.

"The Commission takes these allegations seriously and is taking immediate action to protect against the risks of diversion and criminal elements entering the legal market," Executive Director Shawn Collins said. "The Commonwealth has enacted strict laws and regulations to ensure our legal cannabis industry is safe and accessible. As these allegations would undermine those objectives, the Commission will continue to investigate and work alongside our counterparts in Attleboro and Sheffield to uphold public health and public safety first and foremost."

Last week, the Commission learned of pending criminal charges against Mark Rioux, a registered Marijuana Establishment Agent who is listed as a controlling person with ownership and control interests in the following licenses under the Commission's summary suspension order:

### **Marijuana Establishments**

1. MC281841: Final Tier 9 (Outdoor) Cultivator, Sheffield
2. MC281970: Provisional Tier 1 (Indoor) Cultivator, Sheffield
3. MC281263: Provisional Tier 2 (Indoor) Cultivator, Attleboro
4. MP281325: Provisional Product Manufacturer, Attleboro
5. MR281379: Provisional Retailer, Attleboro

### **Medical Marijuana Treatment Center**

1. Provisional Medical Marijuana Treatment Center, Attleboro

None of Nova Farm's licenses have commenced operations for the adult or medical use industries in Massachusetts.

Along with the summary suspension order, the Commission has ordered Nova Farms to immediately quarantine and secure all marijuana and marijuana products at any stage of cultivation and production, comply with

inspections, requests for information, and requests for documents and interviews, and to post the Commission's notice conspicuously at each affected location.

The Commission's order is based upon information obtained as part of an ongoing investigation into Nova Farms. Rioux, a licensed Massachusetts real estate agent and listed principal of several Massachusetts real estate holding companies, includes commercial leasing as part of his profession.

According to the Attleboro Police Department, Rioux allegedly associated with an individual named Marshall Muir who is listed as a co-conspirator with Rioux to violate the Commonwealth's drug laws pursuant to M.G.L. c. 94C. Muir is not a registered Marijuana Establishment Agent in Massachusetts.

In August, the Attleboro Police Department conducted a forensic search of Muir's cellphone and identified text communications between Muir and Rioux indicating Rioux's efforts to scout a warehouse location for Muir to set up an illicit marijuana grow operation.

The forensic search found communications that established Rioux's awareness of Muir's illicit operation and Muir's efforts to avoid detection by law enforcement, including but not limited to, the posting of "grow licenses on the wall when they (i.e. municipal fire department) walk in that is separated from the grow."

Together with its finding that Rioux maintains ownership and control over six Nova Farms licenses, the Commission determined Rioux's alleged conspiracy to evade licensing laws and violate the state's drug laws establishes an immediate threat to public health, safety, and welfare. As a registered Marijuana Establishment Agent, Rioux previously submitted to the Commission a signed attestation that he would not engage in the diversion of marijuana and marijuana products. Nova Farms surrendered Rioux's Marijuana Establishment Agent registration cards last week.

Upon receipt of the Commission's notice, the licensee has 14 days to request a hearing with the agency. Nova Farm's failure to comply with the conditions

outlined in the Commission's order may result in further administrative action including issuance of a monetary fine and revocation of licensure.

For more information about the suspension order, contact the Commission at 617-701-8400 or email [CannabisCommission@mass.gov](mailto:CannabisCommission@mass.gov).

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## Contact Press Office

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